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Viewing cable 08BOGOTA1391, ARMED FORCES COMMANDER PADILLA ON FARC, HOSTAGES,

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08BOGOTA1391**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08BOGOTA1391	2008-04-14 22:58	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/wikileaks/Seccion/168.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0002
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #1391/01 1052258
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 142258Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2376
INFO RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1442
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0247
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR 9372
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 6100
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0207
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 1495
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1283
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6752
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4370
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDTA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1910

S E C R E T BOGOTA 001391

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES COMMANDER PADILLA ON FARC, HOSTAGES,
PALANQUERO, REGIONAL RELATIONS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Classified By: Ambassador William R. Brownfield.

Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (S) Colombian Armed Forces Commander Padilla stressed to the Ambassador on April 4 that the GOC would do all it could to support the French humanitarian operation seeking Ingrid Betancourt's release, though he doubted its prospects for success. Padilla said GOC continued its efforts to locate all of the hostages, including the three Americans. He also asked for continued USG assistance and intelligence sharing on U.S. hostages, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Padilla reiterated President Uribe's request for an agreement on a Cooperative Security Location (CSL) in Palanquero this year. The Armed Forces Commander said he remains committed to removing military personnel believed to be involved in criminal activity or human rights violations. END SUMMARY,

FRENCH HUMANITARIAN OPERATION

¶2. (C) General Padilla told the Ambassador on April 4 that earlier that day he had met with the French, Spanish and Swiss ambassadors to discuss the French humanitarian initiative on Ingrid Betancourt. (Note: The French Government dispatched an air ambulance to Colombia earlier that week to provide emergency medical attention to Betancourt. It remained parked at Bogota's air base since arrival.) Padilla saw almost no chance that the French would gain access to Betancourt, but said that the GOC was doing everything it could to assist the GOF to ensure it could not be blamed for the operation's failure. The GOC agreed to let the GOF base planes in Colombia, fly wherever they wanted, suspend military operations in areas to which the GOF wanted to travel, and to assist in any other way necessary to facilitate a Betancourt release by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). He said the GOC would oppose the use of Venezuelan helicopters or involvement of Venezuelan President Chavez in the operation, and would offer the French the use of GOC helicopters if needed. Padilla said "the best thing about this operation to date is that the FARC is the one being blamed for intransigence."

U.S. HOSTAGE OPERATIONS

¶3. (S) Padilla underscored to the Ambassador that the GOC continues to work toward the freedom of all of the FARC held hostages. The Colombian military is still working to locate the U.S. hostages with special operations forces deployed in the south. If located the COLMIL stands ready to assist in negotiating the release or cooperating on the rescue of the three U.S. hostages held by the FARC in close coordination with the USG. The Ambassador assured Padilla that the USG will give the highest priority possible to providing intelligence assets for ongoing efforts to locate the hostages. Padilla agreed a USG-GOC "lessons learned" exercise on hostage issues would be useful and could be done at the end of April at the SOUTHCOM-Defense Minister level.

ESTABLISHING A CSL IN PALANQUERO

¶4. (C) Padilla reminded the Ambassador that on April 1 President Uribe had stressed his desire to conclude an agreement for a CSL at Palanquero in 2008. Padilla said the

GOC understood that announcing a CSL at Palanquero would provoke a reaction from the Venezuelans and Ecuadorians. The GOC would never say so publicly, but that was what the GOC was looking for. Padilla said Uribe's support meant the GOC would rapidly respond to a USG request on Palanquero. The GOC did not expect Palanquero to be operational in 2008, but wanted an agreement concluded. Padilla told the Ambassador

he would call the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the U.S. SOUTHCOM Commander on the issue.

VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR

15. (C) Padilla said that from a military perspective, he was satisfied with the way the recent border dust up with Venezuela and Ecuador played out. The Colombian military saw that the Venezuelan Armed Forces were considerably weaker than they had believed. In contrast, the Ecuadorian military showed it was a much more professional, if smaller, force than its Venezuelan counterparts. Padilla acknowledged that the Colombian military needed to reestablish its bilateral relations with the Ecuadorians, but said this would take time. He again asked for continued intelligence exchange on Venezuela, and also sought any additional intelligence the USG could provide on Ecuador. The Ambassador committed to looking into the matter, but reminded Padilla both countries benefited by keeping the intelligence relationship quiet. Padilla agreed.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CORRUPTION PROBLEMS IN THE MILITARY

16. (C) Padilla said he remains committed to removing military personnel believed to be involved in improper criminal activity or human rights violations, even if there is insufficient evidence to bring legal action against them. He asked if the USG could help the GOC identify such individuals. The Ambassador said we shared Padilla's concern, but did not want to substitute ourselves for the Colombian legal process or to undercut Colombian institutions' capacity-- and responsibility--to police themselves. He promised to get back to Padilla on the human rights issue.

BROWNFIELD